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SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: UNION CCM SUPPORTS "INCLUSIVE" GOVERNMENT

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 107

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. Tanzania ruling party CCM announced support for "inclusive" but not "coalition" government in Zanzibar following the February 14-15 meeting of its National Executive Committee (NEC). This phrasing, which appears to support the constitutional changes approved by the Zanzibar House of Representatives (reftel), was prefigured in Ambassador Lenhardt's meetings with senior (mainland) CCM officials in Dodoma February 2-3. Opposition CUF leaders in Parliament were less sanguine about CCM's professed commitment to inclusiveness. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In a February 2 meeting at CCM Headquarters, CCM Deputy Secretary-General (and Minister of Information) George Mkuchika predicted that Ambassador Lenhardt would be the first U.S. envoy to leave behind a "peaceful Zanzibar," where his predecessors had come and gone as the conflict on the isles continued. CCM Publicity and Propaganda Secretary (and Minister of Lands) John Chiligati described the CCM position as pioneering inclusive government to end the exclusion of the 49 percent of Zanzibari voters who support opposition CUF. Chiligati acknowledged the conventional wisdom that support for the two parties was evenly split in Zanzibar. He said CCM would not accept the formation of a coalition government prior to the scheduled October general elections; only afterwards should a unity government be formed. He also insisted on the need for a referendum, to allow the major parties to educate all Zanzibaris (even those few who support other parties) on the benefits of inclusive government. On February 15, Chiligati announced the party's formal position following the NEC session. (Note: Mkuchika and Chiligati are both old guard (and former military) CCM stalwarts from the mainland.)

¶3. (SBU) Other mainland CCM leaders in Parliament, including Speaker Samuel Sitta, repeated the party line on inclusive government and the referendum. Sitta said there was general relief in CCM about the reconciliation on the isles, though he cautioned that the old guard of the Afro-Shirazi Party (the Zanzibar precursor to CCM) still feared the return of the "Omanis" expelled during the 1964 revolution. (Comment: This is a refrain occasionally heard from mainland CCM. Few if any CCM Zanzibar hardliners actually subscribe to this view; instead, they resist the idea of surrendering the power they won by force in 1964.)

CUF views from Parliament

¶4. (SBU) By contrast, Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition (and CUF MP from Pemba) Hamad Rashid Mohamed was more pessimistic about the political movements in Zanzibar. Mohamed criticized President Kikwete for failing to follow through on his 2006 commitment to bringing peace to Zanzibar. He observed that Zanzibar President Karume has become a true believer in reconciliation, in part because he fears prosecution by the next government for corruption. Other CCM Zanzibar leaders, who expect to lose in a free election, were fighting the agreement and arguing that a CUF government would break the Union.

¶5. (SBU) Mohamed said Zanzibar needed an immediate government of national unity to reform the election process (at least 2-3 months needed to prepare a good voter register), reform the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), and change the mindset of the armed forces, which are unaccustomed to CUF/CCM working together. There would not be enough time to put together a clean, verified voter roll for a referendum, not to mention the legal framework to run any referendum well. He was also concerned about ZEC's management of the Union elections in Zanzibar (i.e., for MPs like himself), which would follow Zanzibar rather than Union practice. (Comment: One effect of CUF's registration boycott, if maintained, would be to threaten the re-election of its Union MPs from Zanzibar.)

LENHARDT